



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

Stakeholders' Perception on Public Participation Programme in Promoting Urban Development in Nigeria

Jiman Chado

Principal Lecturer, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Niger State Polytechnic, Zungeru, Nigeria

Foziah Bte Johar

Associate Professor, Centre for Innovative Planning and Development, Faculty of Built Environment, University of Technology, Malaysia

Zayyanu Muhammad

Principal Staff, Department of Development Control, Abuja Municipal Council, Nigeria

Abstract:

Urban planning often involved controversial decisions, thus, requires the participation of stakeholders and citizens leading to more acceptable and legitimise solutions. Public participation exercise, however, is futile if it is not functional for planning and meaningful to the public. Functional participation means better planning decisions while meaningful participation creates opportunities for public to influence decisions leading to a sense of ownership for the plan. This study aims to assess whether public participation programme (PPP) in urban planning is meaningful to the community of Bida town, Nigeria. The study examines the stages of government-based public participation programme (PPP), namely; early, middle and last stage in the participatory process. 344 questionnaires were administered using randomly sampling method to planning officers, traditional leaders, youth leaders, and household heads. Descriptive statistics using central tendency was adopted in the analysis. Findings reveal that public are predominantly involved at the early stage, while the other two stages have no significant citizens engagement. The study suggests areas to improve public participation and invariably would help practitioners and law-makers in designing effective plan for public participation programme in urban development.

Keywords: Stakeholders, Participation, Urban Development, Bida, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The spontaneous growth of urban communities is encountering socio-economic challenges, especially in developing countries (Nnaemeka-Okeke, R. (2016; and Kawu, 2013). These scholars argued that government cannot exclusively alleviate the impact of unplanned urban growth, which is one of the principal factors that lead to the foundation of establishing public participation in urban planning. In the contemporary planning, urban governance becomes democratized which make use of public opinion in decision-making process for urban development. In 1864, Abraham Lincoln described democracy as “government of the people, by the people and for the people” (Buckwalter, 2012). Consistent with the principle of democracy, effective public participation in the development of human communities becomes very imperative to achieve target goals for the present and future generations.

Effective participation is perceived as functional to urban development and meaningful to the public (Miskowiak, 2004). The scholar further elaborates that participation is functional when it helps to make better decision and more effective in urban development. And participation is meaningful when public has opportunities to influence decisions and public feels a sense of ownership for community's planning and management in supporting sustainable urban development. Public participation has sequential stages, namely; early stage, middle stage and last stage (IAP2, 2014; and Dietz, and Stern, 2008). Early stage is mainly information exchanging process, middle stage is programme designing process, while the last stage is principally on programme execution process. Effective citizen's involvement at every stage is paramount to guarantee functional and meaningful participation and invariably supports achievement of objectives for the programme. This study sets out to assess government-based PPP in urban planning for the development of Bida, Nigeria. This article starts with literature, which made up by introduction, needs and stages of public participation in urban development, legal framework of PPP in Nigeria. The article furthered by describing methodology and ends with discussion of findings which are concluded with suggestions on how to promote effective PPP in the cities of developing countries, such as the ancient city of Bida in Nigeria.

2. Needs and Stages of Public Participation in Urban

2.1. Development

The need for public input is very fundamental in planning and development process. However, need for public participation depends on the purpose that the input is serving, because public inputs may be required from a different set of people (IAP2, 2014). Many scholars argued that input required from public may vary with purpose that a programme is designed to achieve (Dietz, and Stern, 2008). These scholars further elaborate that need for public input is categorized into two, namely; to improve decision-making quality and to improve decision legitimacy. In this perspective, citizen involvement in decision making process will guarantee making quality and implementable decisions. When concerned and interested citizens are involved and they contribute in decision-making process, it implies that the decision is in theory, democratic and invariably becomes legitimate in achieving effective public participation in planning process for urban development.

Within the legal framework of urban planning, government agencies responsible for public participatory programmes have power in selecting or describing whom to involve, time to involve, type and degree of engagement and the goals they seek from public involvement (IAP2, 2014). This implies that agencies can invite or engage public through partnership and delegation of responsibilities in urban development. Many scholars argued that despite the needs for public engagement and increasing interest by the public to participate, there has been inadequate and ineffective engagement in the participatory stages of PPP initiated by government for the development of urban areas in developing countries (Nguyen et al., 2015; Mandarano, 2015; and Miskowiak, 2004). As earlier mentioned, these three stages require effective engagement of citizens as described in preceding sections.

(a). Early Stage of Participation: This is a foundation and pillar of public participation which principally focus on information exchange between agency and public (Mandarano, 2015). The mechanism for this stage are; information providing process, information gathering process and interaction forum process. Communication to the public could be through many approaches, such as; public meeting, newspaper, television, radio, deliberative polls, citizen-based committee, questionnaire survey, interview, retreat, and workshop (Patrick, 2017). The objectives of first stage are; to build public awareness, to facilitate public understanding and most importantly to raise public interest in order to participate in planning process for urban development.

(b). Middle Stage of Participation: Effectiveness of middle stage depends on the efficiency of early stage being a foundation for the programme. Middle stage is mainly a programme design process consist the following mechanism; establishing or initiating the programme, determine applicable approach on how to involve citizens, identify potential players for the programme, and identify potential sources and management of fund for the programme (Nadlinfatin, et al., 2015; Kingston, 2007; and Creighton, 2004). These scholars argued that adequate involvement of citizens in each unit of the middle stage is very imperative in promoting effective PPP. The outcome of middle stage is that, public input is used in identifying and understanding crucial public's interest and aspirations, which invariably will guarantee implementable decision making in planning for the development of human communities.

(c). Last Stage of Participation: This stage consists of four distinct activities, namely; implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and review of planned decisions to accommodate urban dynamism for sustainable development (Odumosu, 2015). The activities at this stage are; decision making process on implementation process, monitoring strategy, evaluation strategy, and programme review process if required (Creighton, 2004). Miskowia (2004) argued that this stage fundamentally requires empowering public in the process of implementation, monitoring, and review of PPP in the process of development plan. Consistent with Douglas Miskowiak, many scholars argued that this is a critical stage whereby public will perform function of a watch-dog (supervisory body or overseer) in ensuring all decisions made are implemented accordingly (Rega, and Baldizzone, 2015; and Chirenje, et al., 2013). Many contemporary scholars, however, reveal that implementation of planned decisions has been a great challenge which is attributed to many factors, including lack of adequate and effective public involvement in the participatory stages of PPP (Muse, 2014; Commodore, 2013; and Eneji, et al., 202013). In general, public involvement in every stage earlier mentioned becomes imperative to achieve functional and meaningful public participation in urban development. This implies that public participation activities occur throughout PPP in planning process to guarantee achievement of targets objective for the programme.

3. Legal Framework and Public Participation in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the early urban planning and development framework emerged from the Town and Country Planning Ordinance No. 4 of 1946 which was adopted from the British 1932 Town and Country Planning Act (Owusu, 2016; and Sharon, et al., 2016). Urban environment is a dynamic entity to the extent that the existing planning practices cannot effectively accommodate its dynamism in developing countries. The scenario of urban dynamism results in providing public opportunities to participate in urban development by the Nigerian Environmental Planning Legislations, namely: Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning law (NURPL 1992) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA, 1992) (Muse, 2014).

Government provides opportunities in Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Law (NURPL) Decree No. 88, Section 13 & 16 of 1992; and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Decree No. 86, Section 7 of 1992 (Odumosu, 2015; and Tabiti, and Ayobami, 2011). NURPL consists of the following objectives; effective publication, public input, and public partnership among others. Under EIA, Section 7 and 22 (3) of the Decree stipulates that; government agencies and members of the public shall be given opportunity to participate in the EIA of a proposed urban development. Muse (2014), however further argued that despite axiomatic desirability and increasing interest in public participation, the practices of the programme is yet to accomplished its target, especially in the ancient cities of Nigeria. This challenge could be attributed to inadequate involvement of citizens in the stages of participatory process as described earlier in this study. Consistent with the legal framework supporting citizens' involvement in PPP initiated by government

in Nigeria, it becomes very important to make it effective to enable the programme achieve its target for the development of urban areas.

4. Methodology and Study Area

Quantitative method was adopted and Semi-structured questionnaire research tool was employed in data collection. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered using stratified random sampling technique to the planning officers, traditional leaders, youth leaders, and household heads. The ratio of participants is 22%, 16%, 17%, and 45% for planning officers, traditional leaders, youth leaders, and household heads respectively. In this regard, 344 questionnaires were returned and 56 not returned, representing 86% and 14% respectively. Descriptive statistics was adopted to analyze the perceptions of respondents on stages of government-based PPP in planning for Bida urban area. This city is considered as an ancient community found around 15th

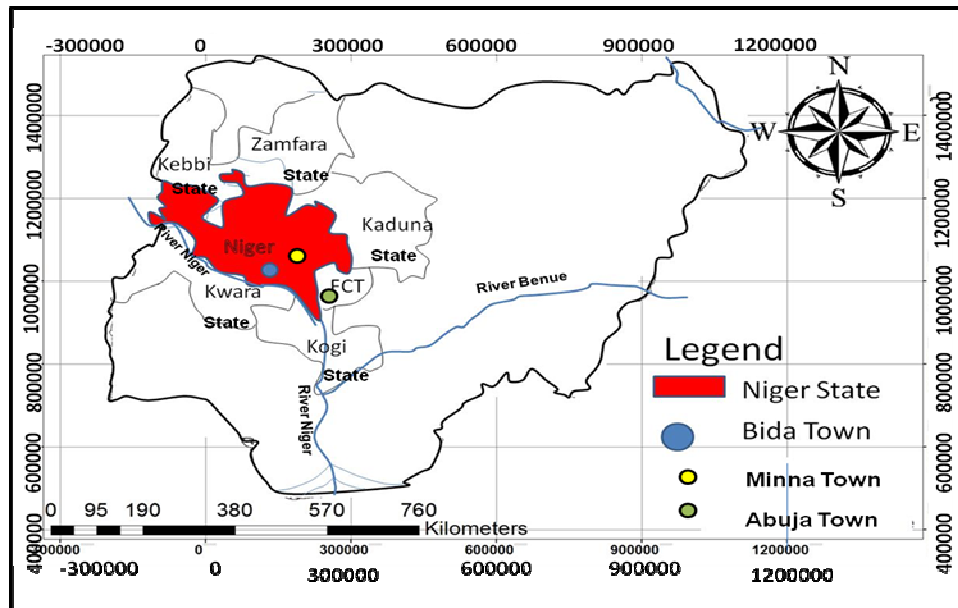


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing Niger State and Bida town

century in the southern guinea savanna of Nigeria. It has land area of approximately 51km² and population of 289, 985 persons in 2012 (N.P.C, 2010; and Nadel, 2969). This town is located between latitude 9^o 1¹E to 9^o 8¹E, and longitude 5^o 7¹N to 6^o 4. An ancient city of this magnitude requires more redevelopment policies to facilitate sustainable urban development. This study upholds that development could be more effective using public input, which requires effective and meaningful PPP in planning for Nigerian urban centres such as Bida.

5. Result Findings

Findings of perception on public participation at early stage have revealed that majority of planning officers (39.47%) agreed that, citizens are participating in decision-making process initiated by government for the development of Bida town. Similar perception is recorded by the traditional leaders, youth leaders, and household heads regarding participation at early stage. The greater proportion of traditional leaders, youth leaders and household heads (40.00%, 39.70%, and 41.29%) had largest proportion agreed that, residents of Bida are involved at early stage of the programme in urban planning process (Table 1). In general, however, the highest proportion of respondents in supporting participation at early stage is shown by the majority of household heads (41.29%), while the lowest proportion of acceptance is recorded by the youth leaders (39.70%).

Cumulative mean ($\sum f/n$) of perceptions have revealed the majority (34.75%) agreed that, public are participating in decision-making process initiated by government for urban development. This implies that, participatory methods such as; public meeting, writing in newspaper, television, radio, deliberative polling, citizen-based committee, questionnaire survey, interview, retreat, and workshop are promoting public awareness about PPP in Bida.(Table 1). Consistent with this finding, it implies that the residents of Bida town are involved at early stage in PPP initiated by government. This result concurred with many previous studies on public participation (Manaf, et al., 2016; Ogihara, et al., 2016; and Swapan, 2014). This scholar, however, further argued that early participatory stage which primarily focuses on communication process is not enough to guarantee functional and meaningful participation in urban development.

Participant	Planning Officers		Traditional Leaders		Youth Leaders		Household Heads		($\Sigma f/n$)
	Scale	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	4	5.26	1	1.80	3	5.17	10	6.45	4.5
2	6	7.90	5	9.10	6	10.30	8	5.20	6.25
3	12	15.80	9	16.40	8	13.79	32	20.60	15.25
4	30	39.47	22	40.00	23	39.70	64	41.29	34.75
5	24	31.60	18	32.70	15	31.00	41	26.50	24.5
Total	76	100	55	100	58	100	155	100	86
Mean	15.5		11.00		11.60		31.00		-

Table 1: Perception on the Early Stage of Public Participation

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

The perception results on middle stage in PPP have revealed majority (46.10% and 44.52%) of planning officers and household heads are undecided regarding citizen participation in decision making for urban development. This indicates that middle stage participation is not quite observed by planning officer and household heads in planning process. Similarly, there is outright disagreement by the majority of traditional leaders and youth leaders (45.50% and 44.80%) regarding middle stage participation in decision making for programme initiation, determine applicable approach on how to involve citizens, identify potential key players, and decision on potential sources of fund and management process (Table 2). This result implies that all the respondents are of the opinion that public participation at this stage is not satisfied and it is not promoting effective government-based PPP in planning for the development of Bida town.

In overall, however, the highest proportion that dissatisfied regarding citizens' participation at early stage is shown by the majority of planning officers (46.10%), while the lowest proportion is recorded by the youth leaders (44.80%). Consistent with the perceptions on middle stage participation, the overall mean ($\Sigma f/n$) results had majority (37.25%) undecided, meaning that effective PPP is rarely observed and invariably insignificant in supporting effective citizen participation in urban development. This finding corroborates many earlier studies on public participation initiated by government (Bryson, et al., 2013). These scholars argued that many developing countries are facing challenges of involving local residents at some critical stages, such as middle stage participation (Nolan, and March, 2016; and Serene, 2016). They further elaborate that involving public at middle stage will not only promote public understanding but also facilitate in making better and implementable decisions in urban development for the present and future generations.

Participant	Planning Officers		Traditional Leaders		Youth Leaders		Household Heads		($\Sigma f/n$)
	Scale	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq.	%
1	6	7.90	5	9.50	2	3.40	21	13.50	8.50
2	33	43.40	25	45.50	26	44.80	56	36.10	35.00
3	35	46.10	23	41.80	22	37.90	69	44.52	37.25
4	2	2.60	2	3.60	8	13.80	4	2.60	4.00
5	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	3.22	1.26
Total	76	100	55	100	58	100	155	100	86
Mean	15.2		11.00		11.6		31.00		-

Table 2: Perception on the Middle Stage in Public Participation

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Findings of perception on last stage in public participation for urban development had majority (51.31%) of planning officers agreed that public are involved in decision-making process for implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and review of the programme to accommodate urban dynamism. This is, however, contrary to the view of traditional leaders, youth leaders, and household heads. Thus, these three categories of respondents had majority (47.27%, 59.90%, and 38.71%) strongly disagreed regarding effective participation of citizens at the last stage (Table 3). This has pointed out that the four categories of respondents had similar perception, except planning officers who were of the opinion that, people participate at last stage is insignificant to support effective PPP in planning for urban development in Bida town.

In overall, the highest proportion that dissatisfied with participation at last stage is the youth leaders (56.00%), while the lowest proportion is recorded by the planning officer (2.60%), although planning officers have the opinion that there is significant participation which is contrary to the remaining three groups of respondents. Mean ($\Sigma f/n$) of cumulative perceptions had majority (30.25%) strongly disagreed that citizens are effectively engaged at the last stage in PPP for urban development. Consistent with cumulative results, many earlier studies have similar opinions (Volker, 2016; and Vicent, and Mendez, 2015). These scholars argued that citizens can play a role of watch-dog in ensuring full implementation or enforcement of planned decisions in developing urban communities. They further elaborate that poor participation of local residents at the last stage may adversely affect functional and meaningful PPP in planning for the development of urban communities.

Participant	Planning Officers		Traditional Leaders		Youth Leaders		Household Heads		($\Sigma f/n$)
	Scale	Freq	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	2	2.60	26	47.27	33	56.00	60	38.71	30.25
2	26	34.20	18	32.70	20	34.50	55	35.50	29.75
3	5	6.60	4	7.30	4	6.90	24	15.50	9.25
4	39	51.31	0	0.00	1	1.70	6	3.87	11.5
5	4	5.26	7	12.73	0	0.00	10	6.45	5.25
Total	76	100	55	100	58	100	155	100	86
Mean	15.2		11.00		11.60		31.00		-

Table 3: Perception on the Last Stage in Public Participation

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

6. Discussion of Findings

This study has shown that there is existence of public participation initiated by government in the development of Bida town in Nigeria. This study, however, reveals that early stage in participatory process, which mainly focus on information exchange processes have been involving public and invariably promotes public awareness about the programme. Second stage in participatory process, which is described as technical stage and requires pre-determined set of people, has low and ineffective participation. In this regard, decision making processes in PPP, such as; initiation of the programme, determine applicable approach, identify potential key players, and identify potential sources of fund management have insignificant public representatives, which is a great challenge in achieving success for the programme. This study also shows that last stage which is programme execution process, such as; implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the programme have no significant public participation for urban development in Bida town. Consistent with the findings, however, middle and last stages of participation require effective public involvement to support functional and meaningful PPP in decision-making process for urban development in ancient cities, such as Bida in Nigeria.

7. Conclusion

This study examines perceptions on public participatory stages of PPP in decision-making initiated by government for the development of Bida in Nigeria. In overall contexts, this study reveals that there is public awareness through information providing process, information gathering process and interaction forum process which are all activities at early stage of the programme. The remaining two stages which are considered as technical stages have no significant public representatives and invariably not supporting effective public participation as described earlier. Literature search and findings of this article, however, upholds that participation at early stage is not enough to support effective PPP in planning for urban development. Alarming from this study shows that there is a need for adequate and effective involvement of public, which must not be only at early stage but also middle and last stages in decision-making process initiated by government for urban development. In addition, involvement of public would also further promote achievement of the target objectives for the programme. Thus, the findings in this paper could primarily help practitioners and law-makers to gain more understanding of the programme and how to make it more effective in developing urban communities in the cities of developing countries, especially ancient traditional cities like Bida, Nigeria.

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